

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking Members to vote “no” on the previous question. If the previous question is defeated, I will amend the rule so we can consider the Obey amendment that was rejected in the Committee on Rules last night on a straight party line vote.

Mr. Speaker, the Obey amendment would add an additional \$2.6 billion for VA health care and pay for it by slightly reducing the size of the tax cut for those persons who make more than \$1 million a year. Instead of receiving a tax cut of \$140,000, they would get \$129,000, a reduction of \$11,000 for millionaires. I will tell you that I cannot believe anybody in this country would object to that. I think if you did a poll right now, overwhelmingly the American people would say, that makes sense in this time of war. I am sure that the Donald Trumps and the Bill Gates of this country could afford to reduce their tax cut by \$11,000 so that our troops can have the best health care possible when they return from Iraq and Afghanistan.

This amendment will correct one of most serious shortfalls in this bill, quality health care for our Nation’s veterans. It is absolutely critical that this funding be increased to meet the growing needs of our country’s veterans.

This Nation made a promise to those serving in the military that they would receive quality health care in return for their valiant service to this country, and now that wounded soldiers are returning to their homes, they deserve the best medical treatment and care available.

We can fix this today. We can fix this today if we allow the Obey amendment to be considered on the floor. But the only way that will happen is if we defeat the previous question.

I want to assure my colleagues that a “no” vote will not prevent us from considering the military quality of life-VA appropriations bill under an open rule, but a “no” vote will allow Members to vote on the Obey amendment. However, a “yes” vote will block consideration of this amendment to help our Nation’s soldiers and our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am in awe of our Nation’s veterans. A few hours from now, Members of this body will get on planes and go to their districts and prepare to attend various Memorial Day events throughout the country, and I know all of us will pay tribute to our veterans. We will thank them, we will pay tribute by using the most wonderful words that we can express to be able to say “thank you” adequately.

But, Mr. Speaker, words are not enough. We have enough words in this House. They are not enough. Yesterday, the Republican majority turned their backs on so many veterans by defeating the motion by the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) to provide more health care benefits to our members of the Guard and Reserve. It was shameful. But today you have a

chance to redeem yourself. Today, you have a chance to stand up and do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, we need to support our veterans. We need to make sure they have what they need. We need to support them not just with words, but with action.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

□ 1115

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise again in support of this rule and in recognition of its importance to the men and women who have and who continue to serve and protect America.

Mr. Speaker, our service men and women sacrifice so much for the safety and security of this Nation, and we have the responsibility to ensure that they have everything that they need, not only to succeed in their duties, but also to enjoy the quality of life that they deserve.

This bill represents the culmination of a lot of hard work and a lot of cooperation to not only completely support our service men and women but to also do so in the most helpful and fiscally responsible way. With a total amount of \$121.8 billion, this bill includes an overall increase of \$5.8 billion in discretionary spending from last year. Specifically, the Department of Veterans Affairs will receive \$2.3 billion more than the previous year. The VA medical care increase from 2005 to 2006, I gave the number earlier for the previous 5 years, another 8.5 percent increase. They will receive, they the VA medical services, an increase of \$1.6 billion. And again, I emphasize that there will be no new fees for either veterans medical services or for prescription drugs.

Today represent a victory for our service men and women in all stages of service from recruitment to retirement. And I appreciate all of my colleagues who have spoken on behalf of the rule and in support of the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH); the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS); and the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), for leading the way and ensuring the necessary funds to provide for the quality of life of our service men and women.

I want to encourage my colleagues to support both this rule and the underlying bill for the sake of those who spend their lives defending ours.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the previous ques-

tion on H. Res. 298, the rule providing for the Military Quality of Life Appropriations Bill for FY06.

Memorial Day will soon be here, and members of this body will head home to join Americans all across the country in celebrating those who serve, and have served, our Nation. These brave men and women undeniably deserve our praise and enduring gratitude for all they have done to defend our nation and secure our freedom. While grateful words and thoughtful recognition is right and necessary, it is incumbent on us in this Congress to ensure that words are met with action.

Over 1 million of our active-duty and reserve soldiers have served to date in Iraq and Afghanistan. These men and women—like their predecessors before them—were promised a life time of health care in return for their service to our country. However, as these young soldiers return home, they find that this promise has not been kept by this Congress or the current Administration.

Today, more than 50,000 veterans are waiting in line for at least 6 months for veterans’ health care—and that problem will only get worse with the growing numbers of returning soldiers from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. As of May 2005, VA had treated only about 85,000 of the 360,675 veterans from these deployments. In 2006, the Department expects to treat 5.2 million veterans—double the number in 1995. And the overall medical care inflation rate for 2003 was close to double the inflation rate.

It is telling that major veteran service organizations call this bill “totally inadequate” and tantamount to veterans being “kicked to the curb.” The current proposal before us is no less than \$2.6 billion below the amount needed to maintain current V A services.

The majority is nothing if not consistent, and has once again blocked attempts to fully fund the VA. The Obey amendment, blocked from even being considered on the floor today, would have increased spending on veterans health services by a total of \$2.6 billion over H.R. 2528 This amendment means real improvements to medical services to meet increased demand for mental health services, prosthetics and amputee care, and for priority 8 veterans. It adds \$300 million to upgrade and improve accessibility to VA medical facilities, restoring most of the \$400 million cut in the bill. And it does so by reducing the tax cuts for millionaires by about 8 percent—so instead of a \$140,000 tax cut, the millionaire filer would get \$129,000 tax cut. When compared to all our veterans have fought for and sacrificed, this seems like the least that we can do.

When Americans serve their nation in the military, whether it is the Second World War or the current war in Iraq, this government makes the promise of a lifetime of guaranteed healthcare. It is outrageous that after all the lip service and rhetoric paid to American veterans, the Republican Majority then turns around and reduces funding for their healthcare. It is long past time that Congress match rhetoric with real action to ensure veterans receive the level of service they were promised.

As my good friend Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi said last night on this floor, our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines have been there for us. Now it is our turn to be there for them. I urge my colleagues to defeat the previous

question and finally give our veterans the health care system they deserve.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

PREVIOUS QUESTION STATEMENT ON H. RES. 298—RULE FOR H.R. 2528 FY06 MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE—VA APPROPRIATIONS

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of this resolution, the amendment printed in section 3 shall be in order without intervention of any point of order and before any other amendment if offered by Representative Obey of Wisconsin or a designee. The amendment is not subject to amendment except for pro forma amendments or to a demand for a division of the question in the committee of the whole or in the House.

SEC. 3. The amendment referred to in section 2 is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE, VA, APPROPRIATIONS BILL OFFERED BY MR. OBEY OF WISCONSIN

Page 31, line 1, relating to VA compensation and pensions, insert after the dollar amount the following: “(increased by \$26,000,000)”.

Page 34, line 21, relating to VA medical services, insert after the dollar amount the following: “(increased by \$1,500,000,000)”.

Page 36, line 9, relating to VA medical administration, insert after the dollar amount the following: “(increased by \$500,000,000)”.

Page 37, line 1, relating to VA medical facilities, insert after the dollar amount the following: “(increased by \$300,000,000)”.

Page 37, line 8, relating to VA medical and prosthetic research, insert after the dollar amount the following: “(increased by \$67,000,000)”.

Page 37, line 20, relating to VA general operating expense, insert after the dollar amount the following: “(increased by \$11,000,000)”.

Page 39, line 16, relating to major construction projects, insert after the dollar amount the following: “(increased by \$150,000,000)”.

Page 41, line 11, relating to minor construction projects, insert after the dollar amount the following: “(increased by \$51,000,000)”.

At the end of the bill (before the short title) add the following new section:

SEC. 409. In the case of taxpayers with an adjusted gross income in excess of \$1,000,000 for taxable year 2006, the amount of tax reduction resulting from the enactment of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-16) and the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-27) shall be reduced by 8.125 percent.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the min-

imum time for electronic voting, if ordered, on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 223, nays 194, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 223]

YEAS—223

Aderholt	Gibbons	Northup
Akin	Gilchrest	Nunes
Alexander	Gillmor	Nussle
Bachus	Gingrey	Osborne
Baker	Gohmert	Otter
Barrett (SC)	Goode	Oxley
Bartlett (MD)	Goodlatte	Paul
Barton (TX)	Granger	Pearce
Bass	Graves	Pence
Beauprez	Green (WI)	Peterson (PA)
Biggett	Gutknecht	Petri
Bilirakis	Hall	Pickering
Bishop (UT)	Harris	Pitts
Blackburn	Hart	Platts
Blunt	Hayes	Poe
Boehlert	Hayworth	Pombo
Boehner	Hefley	Porter
Bonilla	Hensarling	Price (GA)
Bonner	Henger	Pryce (OH)
Bono	Hobson	Putnam
Boozman	Hoekstra	Radanovich
Boustany	Hossettler	Ramstad
Bradley (NH)	Hulshof	Regula
Brady (TX)	Hunter	Rehberg
Brown (SC)	Inglis (SC)	Reichert
Brown-Waite,	Issa	Renzi
Ginny	Istook	Reynolds
Burgess	Jenkins	Rogers (AL)
Burton (IN)	Jindal	Rogers (KY)
Buyer	Johnson (CT)	Rogers (MI)
Calvert	Johnson (IL)	Rohrabacher
Camp	Johnson, Sam	Ros-Lehtinen
Cannon	Jones (NC)	Royce
Cantor	Keller	Ryan (WI)
Capito	Kelly	Ryun (KS)
Carter	Kennedy (MN)	Saxton
Castle	King (IA)	Schwarz (MI)
Chabot	King (NY)	Sensenbrenner
Chocola	Kingston	Sessions
Coble	Kirk	Shadegg
Cole (OK)	Kline	Shaw
Conaway	Knollenberg	Shays
Cox	Kolbe	Sherwood
Crenshaw	Kuhl (NY)	Shimkus
Cubin	LaHood	Shuster
Culberson	Latham	Simmons
Cunningham	LaTourette	Simpson
Davis (KY)	Leach	Smith (NJ)
Davis, Jo Ann	Lewis (CA)	Smith (TX)
Davis, Tom	Lewis (KY)	Sodrel
Deal (GA)	Linder	Souder
DeLay	LoBiondo	Stearns
Dent	Lucas	Sullivan
Diaz-Balart, L.	Lungren, Daniel	Tancredo
E.		Taylor (NC)
Doolittle	Mack	Terry
Drake	Manzullo	Thomas
Dreier	Marchant	Thornberry
Duncan	McCaul (TX)	Tiahrt
Ehlers	McCotter	Tiberi
English (PA)	McCrery	Turner
Everett	McHenry	Upton
Feeney	McHugh	Walden (OR)
Ferguson	McKeon	Walsh
Fitzpatrick (PA)	McMorris	Wamp
Flake	Mica	Weldon (FL)
Foley	Miller (FL)	Weldon (PA)
Forbes	Miller (MI)	Weller
Fortenberry	Miller, Gary	Westmoreland
Fossella	Moran (KS)	Whitfield
Fox	Murphy	Wicker
Franks (AZ)	Musgrave	Wilson (NM)
Galleghy	Myrick	Wilson (SC)
Garrett (NJ)	Neugebauer	Wolf
Gerlach	Ney	Young (AK)

NAYS—194

Abercrombie	Berman	Brown, Corrine
Ackerman	Berry	Butterfield
Allen	Bishop (GA)	Capps
Andrews	Bishop (NY)	Capuano
Baca	Blumenauer	Cardin
Baird	Boren	Cardoza
Baldwin	Boswell	Carnahan
Barrow	Boucher	Carson
Bean	Boyd	Case
Becerra	Brady (PA)	Chandler
Berkley	Brown (OH)	Clay

Cleaver	Kaptur	Rahall
Clyburn	Kennedy (RI)	Rangel
Conyers	Kildee	Reyes
Cooper	Kilpatrick (MI)	Ross
Costa	Kind	Rothman
Costello	Kucinich	Roybal-Allard
Cramer	Langevin	Ruppersberger
Crowley	Lantos	Rush
Cuellar	Larsen (WA)	Ryan (OH)
Cummings	Larson (CT)	Sabo
Davis (AL)	Lee	Salazar
Davis (CA)	Levin	Sanchez, Linda
Davis (FL)	Lewis (GA)	T.
Davis (IL)	Lipinski	Sanchez, Loretta
Davis (TN)	Loftgren, Zoe	Sanders
DeFazio	Lowey	Schakowsky
DeGette	Lynch	Schiff
Delahunt	Maloney	Schwartz (PA)
DeLauro	Markey	Scott (GA)
Dicks	Marshall	Scott (VA)
Dingell	Matheson	Serrano
Doggett	Matsui	Sherman
Edwards	McCarthy	Skelton
Emanuel	McCollum (MN)	Slaughter
Engel	McDermott	Smith (WA)
Eshoo	McGovern	Snyder
Etheridge	McIntyre	Solis
Evans	McNulty	Spratt
Farr	Meehan	Stark
Fattah	Meek (FL)	Strickland
Ford	Meeks (NY)	Stupak
Frank (MA)	Melancon	Tanner
Gonzalez	Michaud	Tauscher
Gordon	Miller (NC)	Taylor (MS)
Green, Al	Miller, George	Thompson (CA)
Green, Gene	Mollohan	Thompson (MS)
Grijalva	Moore (KS)	Tierney
Gutierrez	Moore (WI)	Towns
Harman	Moran (VA)	Udall (CO)
Hastings (FL)	Nadler	Udall (NM)
Higgins	Napolitano	Van Hollen
Hinches	Neal (MA)	Velázquez
Hinojosa	Oberstar	Visclosky
Holden	Obey	Wasserman
Holt	Olver	Schultz
Honda	Ortiz	Waters
Hooley	Owens	Watson
Hoyer	Pallone	Watt
Inslee	Pascrell	Waxman
Israel	Pastor	Weiner
Jackson (IL)	Payne	Wexler
Jackson-Lee	Pelosi	Woolsey
(TX)	Peterson (MN)	Wu
Jefferson	Pomeroy	Wynn
Kanjorski	Price (NC)	

NOT VOTING—16

Doyle	Hyde	Millender-
Emerson	Johnson, E. B.	McDonald
Filner	Jones (OH)	Murtha
Frelinghuysen	McKinney	Norwood
Hastings (WA)	Menendez	Sweeney
Herseth		Young (FL)

□ 1143

Messrs. SERRANO, CHANDLER and POMEROY changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Mr. TURNER changed his vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 223, on H. Res. 298, I was in my Congressional District on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted “nay.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1145

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1449

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my